

Wage and Hour Division, Labor

§ 780.110

EXEMPTION FOR "PRIMARY" AGRICULTURE GENERALLY

§ 780.106 Employment in "primary" agriculture is farming regardless of why or where work is performed.

When an employee is engaged in direct farming operations included in the primary definition of "agriculture," the purpose of the employer in performing the operations is immaterial. For example, where an employer owns a factory and a farm and operates the farm only for experimental purposes in connection with the factory, those employees who devote all their time during a particular workweek to the direct farming operations, such as the growing and harvesting of agricultural commodities, are considered as employed in agriculture. It is also immaterial whether the agricultural or horticultural commodities are grown in enclosed houses, as in greenhouses or mushroom cellars, or in an open field. Similarly, the mere fact that production takes place in a city or on industrial premises, such as in hatcheries, rather than in the country or on premises possessing the normal characteristics of a farm makes no difference (see *Jordan v. Stark Brothers Nurseries*, 45 F. Supp. 769; *Miller Hatcheries v. Boyer*, 131 F. 2d 283; *Damutz v. Pinchbeck*, 158 F. 2d 882).

FARMING IN ALL ITS BRANCHES

§ 780.107 Scope of the statutory term.

The language "farming in all its branches" includes all activities, whether listed in the definition or not, which constitute farming or a branch thereof under the facts and circumstances.

§ 780.108 Listed activities.

Section 3(f), in defining the practices included as "agriculture" in its statutory secondary meaning, refers to the activities specifically listed in the earlier portion of the definition (the "primary" meaning) as "farming" operations. They may therefore be considered as illustrative of "farming in all its branches" as used in the definition.

§ 780.109 Determination of whether unlisted activities are "farming."

Unlike the specifically enumerated operations, the phrase "farming in all its branches" does not clearly indicate its scope. In determining whether an operation constitutes "farming in all its branches," it may be necessary to consider various circumstances such as the nature and purpose of the operations of the employer, the character of the place where the employee performs his duties, the general types of activities there conducted, and the purpose and function of such activities with respect to the operations carried on by the employer. The determination may involve a consideration of the principles contained in § 780.104. For example, fish farming activities fall within the scope of the meaning of "farming in all its branches" and employers engaged in such operations would be employed in agriculture. On the other hand, so-called "bird dog" operations of the citrus fruit industry consisting of the purchase of fruit unsuitable for packing and of the transportation and sale of the fruit to canning plants do not qualify as "farming" and, consequently, employees engaged in such operations are not employed in agriculture. (See *Chapman v. Durkin*, 214 F. 2d 360 cert. denied 348 U.S. 897; *Fort Mason Fruit Co. v. Durkin*, 214 F. 2d 363 cert. denied, 348 U.S. 897.) However, employees gathering the fruit at the groves are considered agricultural workers because they are engaged in harvesting operations. (For exempt transportation, see subpart J of this part.)

CULTIVATION AND TILLAGE OF THE SOIL

§ 780.110 Operations included in "cultivation and tillage of the soil."

"Cultivation and tillage of the soil" includes all the operations necessary to prepare a suitable seedbed, eliminate weed growth, and improve the physical condition of the soil. Thus, grading or leveling land or removing rock or other matter to prepare the ground for a proper seedbed or building terraces on farmland to check soil erosion are included. The application of water, fertilizer, or limestone to farmland is also included. (See in this connection

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§§ 780.128 *et seq.* Also see *Farmers Reservoir Co. v. McComb*, 337 U.S. 755.) Other operations such as the commercial production and distribution of fertilizer are not included within the scope of agriculture. (*McComb v. Super-A Fertilizer Works*, 165 F. 2d 824; *Farmers Reservoir Co. v. McComb*, 337 U.S. 755.)

DAIRYING

§ 780.111 “Dairying” as a farming operation.

“Dairying” includes the work of caring for and milking cows or goats. It also includes putting the milk in containers, cooling it, and storing it where done on the farm. The handling of milk and cream at receiving stations is not included. Such operations as separating cream from milk, bottling milk and cream, or making butter and cheese may be considered as “dairying” under some circumstances, or they may be considered practices under the “secondary” meaning of the definition when performed by a farmer or on a farm, if they are not performed on milk produced by other farmers or produced on other farms. (See the discussions in §§ 780.128 *et seq.*)

AGRICULTURAL OR HORTICULTURAL COMMODITIES

§ 780.112 General meaning of “agriculture or horticultural commodities.”

Section 3(f) of the Act defines as “agriculture” the “production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting” of “agricultural or horticultural commodities,” and employees employed in such operations are engaged in agriculture. In general, within the meaning of the Act, “agricultural or horticultural commodities” refers to commodities resulting from the application of agricultural or horticultural techniques. Insofar as the term refers to products of the soil, it means commodities that are planted and cultivated by man. Among such commodities are the following: Grains, forage crops, fruits, vegetables, nuts, sugar crops, fiber crops, tobacco, and nursery products. Thus, employees engaged in growing wheat, corn, hay, onions, carrots, sugar cane, seed, or any other agricultural or horticultural commodity are engaged

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in “agriculture.” In addition to such products of the soil, however, the term includes domesticated animals and some of their products such as milk, wool, eggs, and honey. The term does not include commodities produced by industrial techniques, by exploitation of mineral wealth or other natural resources, or by uncultivated natural growth. For example, peat humus or peat moss is not an agricultural commodity. *Wirtz v. Ti Ti Peat Humus Co.*, 373 f(2d) 209 (C.A.4).

§ 780.113 Seeds, spawn, etc.

Seeds and seedlings of agricultural and horticultural plants are considered “agricultural or horticultural commodities.” Thus, since mushrooms and beans are considered “agricultural or horticultural commodities,” the spawn of mushrooms and bean sprouts are also so considered and the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of mushroom spawn or bean sprouts is “agriculture” within the meaning of section 3(f).

§ 780.114 Wild commodities.

Employees engaged in the gathering or harvesting of wild commodities such as mosses, wild rice, burls and laurel plants, the trapping of wild animals, or the appropriation of minerals and other uncultivated products from the soil are not employed in “the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities.” However, the fact that plants or other commodities actually cultivated by men are of a species which ordinarily grows wild without being cultivated does not preclude them from being classed as “agricultural or horticultural commodities.” Transplanted branches which were cut from plants growing wild in the field or forest are included within the term. Cultivated blueberries are also included.

§ 780.115 Forest products.

Trees grown in forests and the lumber derived therefrom are not “agricultural or horticultural commodities.” Christmas trees, whether wild or planted, are also not so considered.